A

LETTER

TO A

FOREIGNER,

ON THE

Present Debates

About a

Standing Army.

Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ.

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A

LETTER

TO A

FOREIGNER, &c.

SIR,

YOU that are of no Party, and have no Stake to hazard, are in the propereſt light to determine the Differences of others; and the Alliance of your Country may give you a juſt Title to intereſt your ſelf in the Concerns of ours.

You are not to be told, that the ending of one War, has been the occaſion of another; which may prove more fatal, as it is more near; and that the Pen is become more formidable than the Sword.

But are you not a little ſurpriz'd to ſee Men quarrel with ſo much obſtinacy, and foment ſuch deſtructive Heats; when if the Matter were truly conſider'd, they might be found, perhaps, to mean the ſame thing? And when we have no ſettled Notion of what we talk, our Diſputes will be Eternal.

You very judiciouſly obſerve, that hitherto the Arguments of either ſide, like *Cadmus*'s Souldiers, have defeated themſelves: for one is abhorring the Thoughts of a *Standing Army*, while he is preparing you to continue it from Year to Year; the other tells you, that no Peace is honourable, that has occaſion for ſo much as the Uſe or Exerciſe of Arms, and at the ſame time lays you down a Model of Diſcipline for a *Militia*.

I will not enter into a Debate, Whether the former or the latter be moſt in the wrong, but will reduce the whole Matter to this one Queſtion, (*viz.*) Whether our Freedom and our Nation be more ſafe under the Army, (for ſo I ſhall diſtinguiſh 'em in the following part of my

my Letter) or the Militia, which I take to be the ſum of all our Differences?

But before I offer at that Deciſion, I will firſt obviate this preliminary Difficulty, (*viz.*) Now we have a Peace, we are to turn our Swords into Plowſhares, and our Spears into Pruning-hooks, and believe that it cannot conſiſt with the Freedom of any State to ſtudy the uſe of Arms, or make War their Profeſſion.

To anſwer this I will only ſay, That the greateſt States of the World have ow'd their Freedom to their Arms, and ſupported it by nothing elſe. The *Romans* are chiefly inſtanc'd to prove the contrary; now if what the *Romans* did will be allow'd, that part of the Diſpute will end.

The *Romans* you know from an infamous handful of Slaves and Runnagates, became the glorious Lords of the World, and acquired by their Arms a freedom of their City, that all Nations covered, tho few were honour'd with: theſe People from the founding of their City, to the Diſſolution of their Empire, were in continual War; the Exerciſe and Neceſſity of

Arms was ſo interwoven in their Life, that it may be juſtly call'd a *Martial Government*, and one continually increaſing Army, that at laſt ſpread it ſelf over the whole World. Will any one believe if it had not been for a Profeſſion of Arms, and a Genius to War, that they would ever have flouriſh'd their Colours of Hay over ſo many Nations?

Now, *Sir*, to make you better conceive of our Debate, it will not be unſeaſonable to repreſent to you the difference of our Army and our Militia.

There is ſomething in the braveſt Nature that will not ſecure it ſelf againſt Surprizes; 'tis therefore neceſſary in a Souldier to know the face of an Enemy, to feel the hardſhips of a Camp, and grow familiar with Dangers ——,

Vitamq; ſub dio, & trepidis agat
In rebus —— ——.

How much this is the Qualification of our Army, and how far they have differenc'd themſelves from other Nations, you are not

not to be told; but notwithſtanding you have ever expreſt a very diſtinguiſhing ſenſe of the Bravery of our Army, yet compar'd to the Courage and Fortitude of our Militia, it is nothing! our Militia Souldier, without the Provocation of an Enemy, is call'd out of his Bed to Arms; he puts on his Armour of Buff that never Bullet yet enter'd; his Bandaleers he fills with Gunpowder, and his Pockets with Beef; thus dreſt for the War, and fearleſs of Dangers, in ſpite of Rain or Cold, his tender Wife and Children hanging at his Sleeve, and tho he knows the Perils he's to meet,

——*Non aliter tamen*
Dimovit obſtantes propinquos.

After the Fatigue of a whole Day, the *Hero* returns with certain Triumph, ſettles himſelf in his arm'd Chair, and to his liſtening Progeny relates the Glories of the Field,

——*Geretq;*
Prælia Conjugibus loquenda!

Now, *Sir*, were the Diſpute confin'd to the ſtrongeſt, the Matter, I fancy, might eaſily be determin'd; but it depends more upon a diffidence of our Army: and 'tis objected, That the General of ſuch a Body may enſlave his Country, and make himſelf a Tyrant when he pleaſes: they would remove this Army, and for their Security, would ſubſtitute a Train'd Militia, who will not act to the diſadvantage of the Conſtitution, unleſs we could ſuppoſe them to be *Felons de ſe*. This, *Sir*, is the inſuperable Bar; on this depends the whole Matter.

It may be ſomething towards an Anſwer, to ſhow you how very difficult, if not impoſſible, it would be to form ours into a Trained Militia.

Our Militia conſiſts of ſuch a number of Men, not the ſame Souldiers; for the Trading People that compoſe the greater part, ſeldom have the leiſure, or think it worth their while to neglect their Buſineſs to trail a Pike, or diſcharge a Musket, but hire others (not always the ſame) whoſe Courage they can depend on to ſuſtain the Service.

But

But to place the Argument in the greateſt Extremity; ſuppoſing theſe Men of Property were oblig'd to fight their own Battels, and were continually exercis'd, the Power muſt ſtill reſt in one Man, who according to their own Arguments, may make himſelf a Tyrant when he pleaſes.

But 'tis to be depended on, that the Souldiers would refuſe to obey in an unnatural Deſign againſt themſelves.

I muſt confeſs that Model of an Army is very extraordinary, where the determination of Right and Wrong muſt reſide in the Tumult! And if our Security is to ariſe only from a hope of their Refuſal, I would fain ask any ſober Man, if our boaſted Freedom will not ſtand upon a very tickliſh Point? and who would imagine that the Modellers of an Army ſhould lay down Diſobedience as a material part of their Diſcipline?

Now from Examples of all Armies that have been yet known, it is inconſiſtent with the Notion of a General not to be Arbitrary; ſo that whatever the People be, the Power is ſtill the ſame.

Were I directing my ſelf to any but you, *Sir*, I ſhould a little inlarge on this Subject; but I don't queſtion, after what you have heard already, but this will be ſufficient to give you a true Idea of our preſent Differences.

I will add this Obſervation more, That from what has been ſaid on all hands, it is evident there muſt be ſome Truſt; and I would fain know if there is any People in the World but may be enſlav'd by their own Government? The Truſt you make, place it where you will, may be us'd to your Deſtruction. And ſince it appears that our Danger is the ſame from a *Militia* as an *Army*, what will be the Conſequence of ſo great an Innovation? This very Liberty of which we are ſo jealous, is owing to our Army; and could you imagine that we who are the only Gainers, ſhould make that an Argument to take away their Livings, for which they have hazarded their Lives?

I have heard of a Creature that cannot be born without the Death of the Mother; but as Life is a leſſer Boon than Liberty,

Liberty, Man muſt be the greater Monſter to whom the Memory of good Offices is ſo odious.

'Tis our Character not to know our own Happineſs, and a ſudden Peace has tranſported us too much: Eaſe and Affluence are the difficult Sea of Humane Life; in Adverſity we are ſomewhat guided by the Neceſſity of it, but here the Pilot is in danger, and he muſt be a judicious Mariner that is not loſt in this Storm,

Ab inſolenti temperatam
Lætitia.——————

I am pleas'd to think that (notwithſtanding the ungrateful Diffidence and infamous Murmurings of ſome Spirits among us, againſt the Man that triumphs o're their Enemies) he rules with an innate Goodneſs, without provocation by our good or bad Actions, and will, I hope, in ſpite of all the Inſinuations of ill Men, flouriſh unſhaken by their Malice, or what is yet more treacherous, their Praiſe.

FINIS.